

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend the paragraph starting at line 31 on page 12 of the specification as originally filed (paragraph [0057] of the published application).

An HGF gradual release agent was prepared according to the method of Tabata et al. so that the gradual release of HGF continued for about 4 ~~hours~~weeks after administration. A dilated cardiomyopathy model was prepared by inducing acute myocarditis by subcutaneously administering myosin derived from porcine heart muscle to Lewis rats (males, n =9, purchased from Shimizu Laboratory Animals) followed by allowing six weeks to elapse to induce cardiomyopathy. These animals were divided into an HGF treatment group (n =4) and a sham group (n=5). A gelatin sheet immersed with HGF gradual release agent was affixed to the left ventricular anterior wall of the animals of the HGF treatment group following thoracotomy to promote subsequent gradual release of HGF, while a gelatin sheet immersed with saline was adhered to the left ventricular anterior wall of the animals of the sham group. The size and function of the heart were followed up for 4 weeks after surgery by echocardiography using an ultrasonic probe at a frequency of 10 to 12 MHz.